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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 004382

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CVIS](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: BHUTTO SEEKS TO CLAIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT

REF: ISLAMABAD 4309

Classified By: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto has renewed her suit for a National Assembly seat after the National Reconciliation Ordinance voided all corruption charges and convictions against her. The GOP, for its part, continues to fulfill its side of the Musharraf-Bhutto "deal," by requesting that InterPol cancel notices on Bhutto and her husband. End summary.

Bhutto Asks for Seat

[1](#)2. (U) Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Benazir Bhutto renewed October 8 her 2002 petition to the Sindh High Court, asking it to award her the National Assembly seat originally reserved for her in the 2002 general elections. PPP legal counsel Farooq Naek argued to the provincial court that the October 5 National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) withdraws all corruption cases against Bhutto and actually voids her conviction under another executive ordinance. The conviction had barred her from serving in the legislature. In 2002, Bhutto was at the top of the PPP's list as a candidate for one of the 40 National Assembly seats reserved for women.

InterPol Notified to Withdraw Notices

[1](#)3. (U) Meanwhile, the GOP has withdrawn the "red notices" with InterPol issued against Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari. Interior Ministry spokesperson Javed Iqbal Cheema stated, "Whatever the government requires to fulfill the norms of reconciliation will be done."

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Bhutto's legal move should be viewed as a preamble to her scheduled October 18 return when she will resume hands-on control of Pakistan People's Party activities. It will also re-establish her presence in the National Assembly, where she ultimately needs to build support for a constitutional amendment that allows her to potentially serve another term as prime minister. End comment.

PATTERSON